

## Sept 15 2005 - Rules Committee Releases

### Rules Committee Releases

#### Report on Katrina Investigation

Republican Leadership Rejects Independent Katrina Panel;

Opts for Republican Controlled Investigation Instead

Washington, DC - Rep. Louise M. Slaughter (D-NY), Ranking Member of the House Rules Committee, and the other Democratic members of the Committee, released a report compiled by the Minority Staff of the House Rules Committee on the need for an independent commission, modeled after the successful and widely respected 9/11 Commission, to investigate the Hurricane Katrina disaster response.

A copy of the report is attached.

The report, officially titled "Views of the Democratic Members of the House Rules Committee in Support of the Creation of an Independent Commission on Hurricane Katrina," was entered into the record of the House Rules Committee meeting late last night, where the Republicans voted unanimously to prevent the full House from considering a measure which would create an independent commission to investigate Katrina.

They opted instead to forward a resolution to the House floor which creates a heavily weighted, Republican controlled panel where only Republicans have the power to issue subpoenas.

Any Katrina related Commission or Select Committee would have the responsibility of investigating the federal response to the disaster, including the full examination and evaluation of decisions made by the Republican controlled White House and Executive Branch as well as the Republican controlled Congress.

"This is clearly the fox guarding the hen house. How can Americans trust the results of an investigation where one party is investigating itself, with no checks, no balances and no incentives to get real answers?," asked Rep. Slaughter. "The American people want an Independent Commission to investigate this failure, not a partisan one. Why on earth wouldn't the Republican leadership want the same thing?"

H.Res. 437, which was only made available to the Committee Democrats last night, was drafted behind closed doors, out of public view and with no input from the minority, hardly a "bipartisan" measure.

It gives the Speaker sole authority to appoint a Republican controlled 20 member Select Committee to investigate and report to Congress by February 15, 2006 on the actions of local, State & Federal officials with regard to Hurricane Katrina, both before and after the storm (including the analysis of storm preparation, emergency response plans and the response after Katrina).

The Rule did not make in order an amendment offered which would have substituted the text of H.R. 3764, introduced today by Representative Hastings of Florida, in lieu of House Resolution 437.

The Hastings bill would create an independent, outside commission to thoroughly investigate and evaluate the local,

state and Federal government's response to the events prior to, during and in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

Furthermore, the Independent Commission Hastings bill, which has the support and co-sponsorship of more than 160 members of this House, is also the choice of the overwhelming majority of the American people. A recent ABC/Washington Post poll found that nearly 72% of Americans preferred that a commission of outside experts instead of a partisan committee investigate the devastating events surrounding Hurricane Katrina.